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EDGAR ALLAN POE: HOW TO KNOW HIM. By C. Alphonso Smith. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1921. Pp. 350.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON: HOW TO KNOW HIM. By Samuel McChord Crothers. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1921. Pp. 234.

Professor Smith has given us a very readable review of Poe as critic, poet, short-story writer, and "frontiersman", by which last term is meant explorer of "those vast borderlands of speculation in which vision and intuition tread with firmer footing than smug logic or traditional philosophy". To each of these chapters is prefixed a stimulating introduction, following which come well-chosen illustrative specimens, in accordance with the plan of the series, of Poe's work in kind, with editorial aids and comments. The first chapter, after outlining his life, presents briefly but capably several of the more important foreign and domestic judgments concerning Poe's place and influence, and the succeeding chapter sympathetically examines his character. Professor Smith's estimates of Poe's work show at times a slight bias occasioned by purely personal enthusiasm, but this does not in itself invalidate the appraisals here registered. After all, imaginative sympathy is what we chiefly need in constructive criticism. His defence of Poe as an artist of the beautiful and his belief that Poe was indebted to the old communal ballad for some of his repetitive effects are well expressed, and his constant emphasis upon Poe's interest in technique and structure is sound.

Certainly, within the limits of his restricted poetic programme, Poe is lord. The solemn eeriness of his atmospheres—their qualities of reminiscence, portent, spirit-lure; the haunting cadences of his woe-burdened refrains; the subtle hintings of his whispered repetitions; the shadowy glidings of his alliterations and assonances—all these confirm him an artist in the words and silences that make for the beauty of night and dream and death. But we think it a mistake to continue to include *The Raven* among the truest poems of Poe, with its somewhat theatrically grotesque color-scheme, its over-reliance upon the tinkle of the word, and its lapses into triteness in lines 21, 34, 51 and 60.

Not only does Professor Smith's book exemplify the value of the series of which it is a member, but, even if some of its judg-

ments are too generously defensive, it is a real contribution to the criticism of Poe.

Dr. Samuel M. Crothers writes of Emerson *con amore*,—as a Bostonian, a Unitarian and a man of letters of a Bostonian, a Unitarian and a man of letters. In twenty-two short chapters he discusses, with many reinforcing quotations, the chief qualities of Emerson's character, mind, manner, and attitude toward nature, science, politics, friendship, poverty, peace and war, and also his affectionate but frankly discriminating analyses of American and English qualities.

Perhaps the most illuminating sentence in a humane and delightful book is the following: "Emerson was a man thinking", an adaptation of Emerson's declaration in his address—*The American Scholar*—delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard in 1837, that—

"Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. . . . In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*."

The appreciation of Emerson as a poet in this volume lags behind the enthusiasm displayed for his gentle but sturdy wisdom as lecturer and essayist. For ourselves, although the essays impress us less as 'treatments' than as adventurous eloquences, whose purpose it is to pursue high thoughts for pure love of the chase and zest for the untakable quarry, we think it not improbable that many students of Emerson may sooner or later come to prefer the poems, as having the same tonic earnestness as the essays, the same Quakerish dignity of diction, at times felicitously if almost absent-mindedly whimsical, yet possessing more immediacy, more totality, as chants of single-fibred being and rare but for the most part passionless music. In both there are a quality of reminiscence and a quality of vision that make them literature. They are not little and local, but large and for all.

We regret that this fine interpretation of Emerson's spirit does not contain footnotes identifying for the beginner in Emerson each of the passages so appositely presented. G. H. C.